

The Sustainable Development Goals are international goals adopted at a United Nations summit in 2015, for the period from 2016 to 2030. Seventeen goals and 169 targets were established in order to achieve a sustainable, diverse, and inclusive society where no one will be left behind.

### United Nations adopts goals to “leave no one behind”

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by the 193 member countries of the United Nations at a UN summit in September 2015. These goals are the successor to the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were aimed at eradicating poverty and hunger, and which achieved some progress during their 15-year period. In addition to some of the MDGs that must be continuously addressed, problems that have newly come to light were included among the SDGs’ 17 goals and 169 targets.

Not only have the number of goals increased but also the range covered has been broadened, so that it includes economic growth, social inclusion, and protection of the environment. The key message of the SDGs is “Leaving No One Behind.” The SDGs are said to include all people, regardless of differences of nationality,

ethnicity, religion, politics, economy, etc.

A big change from the MDGs is that business enterprises were included in the main parties expected to take action. To date, governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have played a central role in the UN’s activity, but in the SDGs business enterprises are positioned as important players who are requested to tackle the demands of sustainable development. A number of global companies have already incorporated the SDGs into their activities and also utilized them for marketing and publicity to increase enterprise value.

### Targets are comprehensive, involving everyone in the world

Some of the SDGs may not seem relevant to your daily life. For example, Goal 2, “Zero hunger,” is surely important, but in developed countries we do not often see local news about serious hunger so we might feel that it is a problem somewhere far away.

On the other hand, Goal 8, “Decent work and economic growth,” is important in every nation, and companies doing business overseas need to think about it together with local people. Also, among the SDGs are some with a global scale, such as Goals 13 to 15, “Climate action,” “Life below water,” and “Life on land,” which pertain equally to all people.

People’s degree of interest in each of the 17 SDGs may not be the same, but every goal has a point of contact with people somewhere. Admittedly, it might be easier for enterprises in primary industries or for the food processing industry to feel a connection to the starvation issue. The goal for climate change is a formidable one but concrete efforts are increasing, such as conducting emergency drills and creating emergency maps in order to prepare for natural disasters that may occur locally.

### Not temporary support, but sustainable activity

It is important that activity to achieve the SDGs be sustainable. Donations or support based on surplus earnings will not continue if the principal is lost, so they are not a fundamental solution to the problem. Ideal solutions must be economically viable. In other words, the idea is not to take action on the SDGs in order to make a contribution to society, but rather to solve society’s problems through the natural course of a company’s business.

In addition, it is important for each employee to work with an awareness of the SDGs. The key is to incorporate them into the business goals of each department, and to continue to work on them on an individual level.

The sustainable development goals for 2030. What they are aiming for is to end poverty, eliminate the gap between rich and poor, preserve the Earth’s environment, and foster peace, which are universal and cross-border goals. How should we move forward from here? By launching initiatives corresponding to the 17 SDGs, as part of international partnerships.



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Tokyo Building, 2-7-3 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-6419 Japan Phone: 81-3-6810-1006 Fax: 81-3-5220-7274  
URL: www.azbil.com/



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